Prescribed Grazing

- Ensures sustained productivity
- Improves land health
- Shows responsibility to natural resources
- Ensures a future for livestock grazing

Key Principles of Grazing Management

- Plants need the opportunity to complete their life cycle: to grow, to set seed, and to reproduce.
- Grazing impacts on plants are determined by when, where, how much, and how often they are grazed. We control these impacts by manipulating the **duration** (length of time of grazing periods), **timing** (season of use) and **intensity** of grazing.
- Vegetation change can be achieved through managed grazing, mechanical means, fire, and chemical applications to enhance plant and animal diversity and production.
- Keep records on pasture on and off dates, numbers of livestock, and level of utilization.

Some benefits of applying prescribed grazing:

- Increased disaster flexibility (drought, fire, flood)
- Improved plant and animal diversity
- Improved sustainability
- Decreased variability in annual production
- Favor the desired plants and put pressure on less desired plants
- Serve as a tool to address objectives with grazing, for example:
  - ◊ winter sheep grazing to thin sagebrush
  - ◊ spring grazing to reduce cheatgrass dominance
  - ◊ weed control and prevention
  - ◊ firebreak establishment

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Prescribed Grazing

Key Principles of Grazing Management

Duration

Duration is the length of time of the grazing period.

How is duration managed?

- Fewer herds, greater stock density, and more pastures allow for time controlled grazing.
- Shortened length of grazing periods during the growing season.
- Increased length of rest periods.

Why is time important?

- It takes grazed plants 20 or more days to regrow enough to be grazed a second time if growing conditions are favorable.
- Most rangeland plants should be grazed once per year because they have a very limited opportunity to regrow (limited moisture).
- Most pastures (irrigated or meadows) can be grazed more frequently (several times per year), if adequate rest periods are allowed.

Timing

Timing is the season of use.

How is timing managed?

- Season of use can be alternated to limit negative impacts of grazing during critical periods.
- Rest during the growing season in each pasture at least 1 in 3 years typically allows plants to recover.

Why is timing important?

- Grazing during rapid growth at the same time every year decreases plant diversity and forage production.
- Grazing when a plant is bolting is the most damaging time in its life cycle and results in lower forage production.
- Allowing for total rest of some pastures annually builds flexibility.

Intensity

Intensity is the level of use on individual plants during the grazing period.

How is intensity managed?

- High stock density for short periods of time gives better control of distribution and results in more even grazing use.

Why is intensity important?

- Plants need adequate leaf material following grazing to continue photosynthesis and regrow.
- If all plants and pasture locations are grazed more uniformly, pressure is reduced on the most desired plants and locations.
- Adequate cover to protect the soil from erosion should remain following grazing.

Balance an ungrazed grass plant to determine the stubble height at 50% utilization.